

Northern Regional College

Governing Body – Unreserved Business

Minutes of the Unreserved Meeting of the Governing Body held on Wednesday 23 November 2022 in Newtownabbey campus commencing at 4.30pm.

Present: Mr K Nelson (Chair), Mr K Chambers, Mrs L Crilly, Dr P Graham, Ms J Hemphill, Mr M Higgins, Ms Y Mallon, Mrs P Martin, Mr G McAllister, Mr W McCluggage, Mrs D McIlwaine, Mr R McKernan, Ms A Morrow, Mr I Murphy, Mr D Small

In Attendance: Mrs C Brown, Mr S Lavery, Ms M McKeag (111.4), Mr K Mooney 111.4), Ms J Small
Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

111.4 New Build Update

Mr Kieran Mooney (SIB Project Director) and Ms Maeve McKeag (Programme Management Officer) were introduced to the meeting by Mr Lavery.

Mr Mooney presented his update report and advised Committee that the Coleraine project was now at mid-point, marked recently by the Topping Out ceremony, with completion due in 14 months. He thanked Mr McCluggage and Mr Murphy for their support, assistance and challenge in their role of reporting to the Governing Body.

4.43pm Ms McIlwaine joined the meeting.

During a period of debate, reference was made to a potential road safety issue posed to students accessing the College via the link road to St Patrick's Barracks. Members noted constraints associated with the development of the road outside the College's control but that the College would continue to engage with all parties on this. Mr Mooney also reassured members on contingency arrangements to cover fluctuating building costs for the Project.

4.56pm Ms Mallon joined the meeting.

The Principal commended the members of the Project team for overcoming the challenges faced since commencement.

Mr Mooney paid tribute to Ms McKeag for her dedication and the Chair and members congratulated the team on their excellent work.

5.00pm Mr Mooney and Ms McKeag left the meeting.

111.1 Apologies

The Chair welcomed Ms Amy Morrow to her first meeting of the Governing Body.

Apologies were received for Mr Hutchinson, Mr MacAuley and Mr Shevlin.

111.2 Declaration of Interests

None.

111.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 were approved.

Proposed: Dr Graham

Seconded: Mr Small

111.4 Matters Arising

- Members heard that the Head of NICS had sent a letter of condolence to the King on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, on behalf of NICS and all ALBs.
- Enrolments information has been included in the VP Summary Report to the Education Committee.
- The Safe Resumption survey was recirculated to all members.

111.5 Chair's Communication/ Correspondence

The Chair confirmed membership of the College Task & Finish Group to review the VFM viz: The Chair, Principal, Vice Chair, Mrs Crilly, Dr Graham, Mr Small, Mrs Martin and Ms Mallon. Members heard details of Chair's engagements since the last meeting and noted the following upcoming meetings:

- 25 November 2022 - DfE Innovation Workshop FE Review
- 28 November 2022 - Chair and Principals' Group
- 5 December 2022 - Follow-up to Innovation Workshop and the first meeting of the T&F Group
- 7 December 2022 - Partnership Engagement Event
- 1 February 2023 - Accountability Meeting
- 21 February 2023 - GB Strategy Day to consider Tribal issues and updates from the Task & Finish Group. Findings from the NRC GB Self-Assessment 2021-22 report would also be considered. The report and summarised version were noted for information.

111.6 Principal's Report

The Principal spoke to his report and highlighted a number of key issues including student achievements, cost of living business case for students and TAMS update, previously considered at the Audit & Risk Committee and reported to the Education Committee. He outlined TAMS issues of under-performance, resultant stress placed on staff and the Principals' position on further implementation, with a meeting of the Principals to take place on 28 November.

111.7 Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

The MSFM was presented for annual note. Members were reminded that the FE Partnership Agreements would be in place by 31 March 2023 and would replace the MSFM.

Action: The Governing Body noted the MSFM.

111.8 Draft Fees and Charges Policy 2023/24

Mr Laverty presented the draft policy and outlined the background to the suggested increases. He reported that the suggested proposals aligned fees with the other colleges. Members noted that the draft policy had been reviewed by the Fees Working Group and approved by the SLT.

Action: The Fees Policy & Fees Regulations 2023/24 were approved.

Proposed: Mrs Martin Seconded: Mr Murphy

111.9 Education Committee

The draft minutes of meeting on 3 October 2022 were noted and Mr Chambers gave a verbal update of the meeting on 17 November 2022. He reported that, having attended a Shared Island Initiative in October, Dr Graham had provided a very interesting and detailed summary of information.

Action: Dr Graham's summary paper to be circulated to all members for information.

Mrs Brown introduced the SER/QIP for members' approval. She explained the overall performance and effectiveness scoring and highlighted that this was a continuous development improvement process. Feedback received at meeting with DfE Quality Improvement Team on November 21 was aligned with the self-evaluation.

Mrs Brown advised the structure for the monthly performance review and monitoring process, which reports back to the Governing Body through the Education Committee.

Action: The Governing Body were content to approve the submission of the SER/QIP and sign-off to the Assurance Statement.

The Chair asked Mrs Brown to pass on thanks from the Governing Body to Dr Monteith and her team.

111.10 Resources Committee

Mr Murphy presented the draft minutes of meeting on 10 October 2022 and outlined key issues discussed and concerns around potential budget reductions. Members noted that these issues would be considered further by the T&F Group. The draft minutes were noted.

Mr Laverty summarised developments with mandatory training uptake and noted that this would also be addressed through an emphasis on culture in the new strategic plan.

Members noted the significant progress made but emphasised the need for line managers' review. A number of board members felt that if the mandatory training was not completed within the next two weeks, that a more formal route be taken to ensure compliance.

111.11 Audit & Risk Committee

Mr McCluggage gave a verbal update of the meeting on 16 November which had been preceded by the annual independent meeting with auditors. He referred to an excellent Health & Safety presentation received and reported that the Draft Report to those Charged with Governance proposed an unqualified audit opinion.

Actions:

- The draft minutes of the meeting on 28 September 2022 were noted.
- The Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 were approved.
- The Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2021/22 was agreed.

111.12 Finance Update

Mr Laverty presented his summary report and outlined resource pressures, capital position and College in-year position. Members noted that whilst NI FE Colleges are solvent, all annual accounts show an annual deficit.

Mr Laverty highlighted risk to the 2023/24 baseline funding from having no Executive and the Principal advised that the College was working through the T&F Group and collectively with the Department and the FE sector, on proposals to address potential budget shortfall. The January meeting of Resources would also finalise a number of scenarios.

The Governing Body noted the finance update.

111.13 Strategic Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25

Ms Small presented the final version of the Strategic Plan and advised minor changes to the version discussed at the June meeting. Members noted that if any significant changes arose from the upcoming Tribal report, the Plan would be reopened for decision and update at the Strategy Day on 21 February 2023.

Action: The Governing Body approved the Strategic Plan 2022/23–2024/25 and arrangements for any update.

111.14 Any Other Business

Ms McIlwaine received assurance on the HR system's programme of audit and inspection, especially in relation to safeguarding.

111.15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 1 February 2023 in Newtownabbey campus.

Members were also reminded of the 2 December Staff Awards; 8 December graduation events; 13 December Christmas lunch; and 21 February Strategy Day at venue to be decided.

The meeting ended at 6.20pm.

Mr K Nelson



Chair

Date 1 February 2023

Mrs K Wallace



Secretary